THE CHARGE OF THE GODDESS

Listen to the words of the Great Mother, who of old was called Astarte, Artemis, Dione, Melusine, Aphrodite, Ceridwen, Diana, Arionrhod, Brigid, and by many other names:

"Whenever you have need of anything, once in the month, and better it be when the moon is full, you shall assemble in some secret place and adore the spirit of Me who is Queen of all the Wise. You shall be free and as a sign that you be free, you shall be naked in your rites. Sing, feast, dance make music and love, all in My presence, for Mine is the ecstacy of the spirit and Mine also is joy on earth. For My Law is love unto all beings. Mine is the secret that opens upon the door of youth, and mine is the cup of wine of life that is the Cauldron of Cerridwen, that is the holy grail of immortality. I give the knowledge of the spirit eternal and beyond death I give peace and freedom and reunion with those that have gone before. Nor do I demand aught of sacrifice, for behold, I an the Mother of all things, and My love is poured out upon the Earth.""

Hear the words of the Star Goddess, the dust of whose feet are the hosts of Heaven, She whose body encircles the Universe:

" I who am the beauty of the green earth and the white moon among the stars and the mysteries of the waters, I call upon our soul to arise and come unto me. For I am the soul of nature that gives life to the Universe. From Me all things proceed and unto Me they must return. Let My worship be in the heart that rejoices, for behold - all acts of love and pleasure are My Rituals. Let there be beauty and strength, power and compassion, honor and humility, mirth and reverence with in you. And you who seek to know Me, know that your seeking and yearning will avail you not, unless you know the Mystery: for if that which you seek, you find not within yourself, you will never find it without. For behold, I have been with you from the beginning, and I am that which is attained at the end of all desire."

Alone, awesome, complete in Herself, the Goddess, She whose name cannot be spoken, floated in the outer darkness, before the beginning of all things. As She looked into the curved mirror of black space, She saw by Her own light Her radiant reflection, and fell in love with It. She drew It forth by the power that was in Her and made love to Herself, and called Her "Miria, the Wonderful."

Their ecstasy burst forth in the single song of all that is, was, or ever shall be, and with the song came motion, waves that poured outward and became all the spheres and circles of the worlds. The Goddess became filled with love, swollen with love, and She gave birth to a rain of bright spirits, that filled the worlds and became all beings.

But in that great movement, Miria was swept away, and as She moved out from the Goddess, She became more masculine. First She became the Blue God, the gentle, laughing God of love. The She became the Green one, vine-covered, rooted in the earth, the spirit of all

growing things. At last She became the Horned God, the Hunter whose face is the ruddy sun, and yet dark as Death. But always desire draws Him back toward the Goddess, so that He circles Her eternally, seeking to return in love.

All began in love; all seeks to return in love. Love is the law, the teacher of wisdom, and the great revealer of the mysteries.

In love, the Horned God, changing form and changing face, ever seeks the Goddess. In this world, the searching and the seeking appear in the Wheel of the Year.

She is the Great Mother, Who gives birth to Him as the Divine Child Sun at the Winter Solstice. In spring, He is the Sower and the Seed who grows with the growing light, green as the new shoots. She is the Initiatrix, Who teaches Him the Mysteries. He is the Young Bull; She is the Nymph, seductress. In summer, when light is longest, They meet in union, and the strength of Their passion sustains the world. But the Gods' face darkens as the sun grows weaker, until at last, when the grain is cut for harvest, He also sacrifices Himself to Self, that all may be nourished. She is the Reaper, the grave of earth to which all must return. Thoughout the long nights and darkening days, He sleeps in Her Womb. In dreams, He is the Lord of Death, who rules the Land of Youth beyond the Gates of Night and Day. His dark tomb becomes the Womb of Rebirth, for at Midwinter She again gives birth to Him. The cycle ends and begins again, and the Wheel of the Year turns on and on.

ALEXANDRIAN PENTACLE

The pentacle is the primary Earth symbol. Its gender, like that of the wand, is not usually emphasized, but as the symbol of the Earth Mother, it may be taken as being feminine.

It is the centerpiece of the altar, on which objects are consecrated; the water and salt bowls, too, are placed on it for blessing - some covens do not use a salt bowl but place the salt directly on the pentacle from which, after blessing, it is tipped into the water.

In persecution days, the pentacle used to be inscribed on wax for each Circle, so that it could be destroyed afterwards as a dangerous piece of evidence. Today it is usually a disc of metal, mainly in copper, and it is normally 5-6 inches in diameter.

The central upright pentagram is the primary symbol of the Craft. Together with the upright triangle above it, it forms the symbol of third degree initiation. The inverted pentagram, top right, is that of the second degree, and the inverted triangle, top left, that of the first degree. The Horned God symbol is bottom left, and bottom right are the waxing and waning Moon-cresents of he Goddess (also sometimes described as the breasts of the Goddess). The two SSs at the bottom represent the polarity of Mercy and Severity, in the form of the kiss (plain S) and the Scourge (S with a stroke).

PENTACLE FROM THE LIBER UMBRARUM BY DOREEN VALIENTE

The five-pointed star or pentagram is one of the oldest signs in the world. It represents, among other meaning, magic itself, the dominion of the spirit over the four elements of the material creation.

The Circle which encloses it, being without beginning or ending, represents infinity and eternity. Another meaning of the pentagram is that it bears a rough resemblance to a human figure, as if standing upright with the arms and legs outstretched. Hence the pentagram in a circle is a symbol of the human being in relationship to the Infinite.

The eight armed figure in the center of the pentagram represents the Eight Ritual Occasions of the Witch's year, four Greater Sabbats and four Lesser Sabbats. The Greater Sabbats are Candlemas, May Eve, Lammas, and Hallowe'en. The Lesser Sabbats are the equinoxes and solstices. The eight of this symbol plus the five of the pentagram makes 13, the traditional number of the Witches coven.

The three X-shaped crosses around the pentagram represent the three annointing of the initiation ceremony, 'two above and one below'; that is, two above the waist and one below it. The two spirals or S-shapes represent the ancient symbol of the twin serpents, the dual forces of positive and negative, yang and yin, masculine and feminine, that underlie all manifestation.

The symbols on the three upper points of the pentagram are the two crescents of the waxing and waning moons, and the circle of the full moon. Together they represent the primordial Goddess of Nature, often depicted in triple form as Nymph, Mother and Crone, the three phases of the moon.

The symbols on the two lower points of the pentagram represent the two aspects of the ancient God of witches. They are conventionalized drawings of a horned head and a skull and crossed bones. The former sign represents the Horned God of Life and Fertility, and the latter is the God of Death and what lies beyond.